We want to demonstrate that family involvement is crucial to the success of children.

—Owen Heleen

Schools need to 'empower' parents, to teach them how to discipline their children, or to turn off the T.V.

—Ivy Lovelady

Schools just don't see it as their role to court parents or to cultivate a friendship in any way for any real benefit.

—Vahac Mardirosian

There is the question of who controls the child's life in school. Teachers are concerned that parents will interfere.

—Sandra Feldman

Efforts To 'Cultivate a Friendship' Still Limited

Continued from Page 23

from sending home student report cards to asking parents to attend graduation ceremonies.

But experts say that, in most schools, parent participation remains limited in scope. Generally, it is confined to fund raising and other volunteer activities, participation in parent-teacher conferences, and attendance at school plays or sporting events.

"In most schools, parents are not seen as essential partners at all," says Vahac Mardirosian, president of the Parent Institute, a community-education agency in San Diego. "Schools just don't see it as their role to court parents or to cultivate a friendship in any way for any real benefit."

In a few places, however, educators who are alarmed at what they see as a growing gap between home and school have begun to reach out to families through more assertive measures. These include sponsoring parenting workshops, creating parent centers, visiting students' homes, developing contracts that detail the obligations of parents and teachers, and enhancing communication between home and school.

In the most extreme instances, states and localities have threatened to impose fines or jail sentences on parents who fail to take responsibility for their children's behavior problems. *(See related story, page 30.)*

"Schools must do more to position families to help their children in school," states a recent report by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

"Though some may feel this adds to an already overburdened set of responsibilities for schools," the report adds, "the situation is such that the potential for the school to address basic family needs must be used."

Sending a Message: 'Parents Matter Here'

Joyce L. Epstein, director of the Effective Middle Schools Program at Johns Hopkins University, has identified five types of parent involvement in education. These include:

- The basic obligations of parents, such as providing for their children's health and safety and creating a home environment that supports learning;
- The basic obligations of schools, such as communicating with parents about school programs and their children's progress;
- Parent involvement at the school site, through attendance at student performances and sporting events, or through work as volunteers;
- Parent involvement in learning activities at home, such as monitoring or assisting their children with homework; and
- Parent involvement in school governance and advocacy, by serving on advisory councils that make important decisions about school programs and policies, or by participating in external watchdog groups.

At all grade levels, Ms. Epstein maintains, parents need clear information about course requirements and objectives, standards for promotion and graduation, grading practices and test results, and school budget and policy decisions.

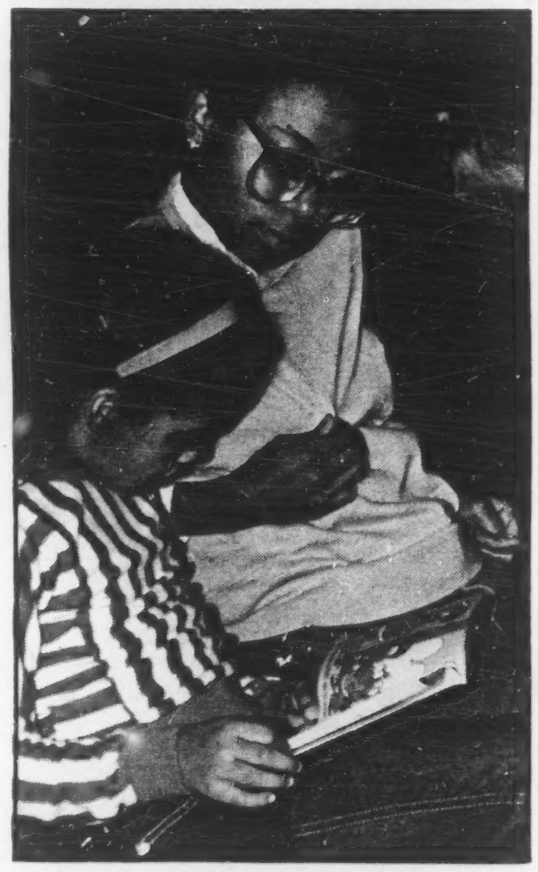
But schools vary in how they choose to communicate such information to families and whether they attempt to create more meaningful forms of collaboration.

'Dignifying' the Parents' Role

At the most basic level, some schools are trying to clarify the obligations that parents and teachers have toward children through the creation of written "contracts" or agreements.

School-parent contracts are an important aspect of the Quality Education Project, or Q.E.P., launched in 1982 by Nancy

Continued on Page 26



Reading at home is one basic tool for parent participation in education.

Teachers Rank School Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?

Listed in Rank Order of Mention By All Teachers in 1989	All Teachers 1989 %	1984 %
Parents' lack of interest/support	34	31
Lack of proper financial support	27	21
Pupils' lack of interest/training	26	20
Lack of discipline	25	19

Source: Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teachers' Attitudes, 1989

Actual or Planned Parent-Involvement Activities

	Actual %	Planned %	Neither %
Conducting seminars, workshops, or courses for school or school-district personnel	68	25	18
Collecting and disseminating materials and information from various sources on parent involvement	66	16	18
Helping parent -involvement projects develop advisory councils that include parents	53	12	34
Conducting seminars, workshops, or courses for parents	53	18	28
Developing materials for use by school or school-district personnel	50	22	28
Helping school districts coordinate with other community groups or organizations to develop stronger parent-involvement activities	45	18	37
Disbursing funds for the development and operation of parent-involvement activities in school districts	42	14	44
Developing materials for use by parents	41	17	41
Developing programs and/or materials for in-service training on parent involvement	37	25	38
Helping school districts or schools develop evaluations of their parent-involvement activities	35	26	39
Conducting state evaluations of local parent-involvement activities	25	25	50
Developing standards for in-service training of teachers and/or administrators regarding aspects of parent involvement	23	21	56
Other forms of assistance	22	—	—
Conducting recognition programs for outstanding local parent-involvement activities	22	21	58
Giving demonstration grants to develop parent-involvement activities locally	18	16	66

Base: All 50 State Education Agencies

Source: "How Involved Are State Education Agencies in Parent Involvement?" Frank E. Nardine, Warren K. Chapman, and Oliver C. Moles, 1989

More Businesses Are Training Employees To Be Better Parents

By Deborah L. Cohen

Taking steps they hope will enhance the productivity of both present and future workers, a growing number of businesses are offering courses on how workers can do their jobs better at home—as parents.

According to the Families and Work Institute, a national clearinghouse that tracks employer efforts to help workers balance work and family responsibilities, about 1,000 companies now offer workplace seminars on topics ranging from how to spur a child's interest in reading to how to manage an adolescent.

Such programs provide parents with tools to help their children thrive academically, while easing the parenting stresses that can hinder their own job performance.

"The real intent is to strengthen home-school involvement through the workplace," says Gary Frizzell, executive director of an education foundation launched by the U S West telecommunications firm.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, both parents worked for at least part of 1987 in 68 percent of all two-parent households with children under age 18. Single parents, the vast majority of whom hold jobs, head a quarter of all families. Outside the home, notes Mr. Frizzell, "the next best place to reach [parents] is at work."

The U S West Education Foundation, a nonprofit charity that since 1985 has solicited corporate aid to offer seminars for high-school students on exploring life choices, is now marketing Parenting for Education, a program businesses and other groups can use to spur employees' involvement in their children's education.

Such efforts are "an important first step in recognizing the duality of parents' responsibility," says Donna Euben, program director of the Child Care Action Campaign. Besides seeking a comprehensive national child-care system, the coalition of leaders of corporations, unions, government agencies, women's groups, and the media promotes job policies that foster "effective, loving parents."

'The Work-Family Balance'

Employers see such efforts as a way to bolster "the education and future employability of children," says Jeri S. Darling, director of policy studies and technical assistance for the Work in America Institute, based in Scarsdale, N.Y.

Backed by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the nonprofit work-research organization two years ago launched Linking Home and School Through the Workplace, a project offering businesses information and assistance on programs to spur parent involvement.

About a dozen companies and organizations are launching pilot programs identified by the institute to help parents work with children on reading, mathematics, and science; answer general questions on how they can assist children; and guide them in helping children think critically about television viewing. A spring conference on the initiative drew representatives from about 60 major companies, government agencies, and unions.

"The workplace has the facilities and the economic motivation to deliver the training to parents in the most cost-effective manner," Jerome M. Rosow, the institute's president, said at the conference.

Besides improving the prospects of America's future workers, says Ms. Darling, backers of such efforts also are "interested in supporting the work-family balance for parents and finding ways to support family requirements and improve parent-child relationships."

"We've conducted enough surveys among employees in the 1980's to reach the conclusion that off-the-job anxiety is a common phenomenon," adds Burke Stinson, a spokesman for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. "One of the root causes is simply fretting about Johnny or Mary in school."

A.T.&T. allows employees to take leave on short notice to deal with school-related matters, Mr. Stinson says, and is considering offering the program Parents—Homework Helpers Not Hinderers. That course, designed by Myrna G. Wasserman, a Mountainside, N.J., consultant, offers parents tips on how to make the most productive use of limited time to motivate their children and bolster their study skills.

Such programs also offer a payoff for employers, contends Lynn Clark, manager of training and development for the McKee Baking Company's headquarters in Collegedale, Tenn.

"If employees are doing O.K. at home with their family life and their kids in school," he explains, "it is obviously going to impact their work life as well."

McKee Baking, which produces Little Debbie snack cakes, recently offered a series of workshops—based on the Megaskills program developed by Dorothy Rich, founder of the Home and School Institute Inc.—giving parents "recipes" to stimulate learning and supplement schoolwork.

These approaches, suggests Hugh Little, a partner in Capital Associates, a commercial-office developer in Cary, N.C., reflect an awareness that there are "common traits" among the families of successful children—regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances—and that honing those traits will reap long-term rewards.

"What we're trying to do," he adds, "is to cause families and parents to refocus and rethink their priorities—are they doing what they can do to ensure that their children get the best education?"

Mr. Little helped launch Community Action Through Cooperative Homework, or CATCH, a program run by the Cary Chamber of Commerce that offers Megaskills-style workshops.

The Committee for Economic Development, which has called for early and sustained intervention to improve the academic prospects of troubled children, has long urged employers "to make their internal policies reflect their external policies," says Sandra Kessler Hamburg, the business group's director of education studies.

"If they say they are in favor of greater parental involvement in education, they should provide some means to allow it," she maintains, citing such mechanisms as flexible leave policies and parenting-education classes at the worksite.

Some also view such practices as a way to attract and retain employees.

"It's one more thing to make the workplace more attractive," says Robert Bailey, assistant director of training and development for the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, which has worked with the Work in America Institute to offer the Family Math and Family Reading programs.

The Millington Star

Parents from the Millington Naval Air Station in Memphis come to parenting workshops taught by local P.T.A. President Marian Bruns and sponsored by First Tennessee National Corporation.

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Honig, the wife of California's superintendent of public instruction.

The program, currently used in schools throughout that state and Mississippi, is designed to improve the coordination between home and school by training school officials, teachers, and parents to work together to improve student learning.

The performance contracts provide a visible symbol of that teamwork, Ms. Honig notes.

As part of their "pledge," parents sign a document promising that they will: provide a quiet place for their children to study, encourage them to complete their homework, get them to bed by 9 P.M., send them to school on time, spend at least 15 minutes a day reading with or to them, and attend back-to-school nights, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and other school events.

In exchange, principals and teachers sign contracts in which they promise to provide a safe place for children to learn, teach all the concepts necessary for academic achievement, strive to be aware of children's individual needs, and communicate with parents about their children's progress.

Contracts are also an important component of the "Accelerated Schools" program begun several years ago by Henry M. Levin, a professor of education and economics at Stanford University.

As part of the program, which aims to bring the achievement of disadvantaged youngsters up to grade level by the end of 6th grade, all parents or guardians are expected to sign a written agreement that clarifies the obligations of the school and the family to promote learning. Parental obligations include ensuring that children go to bed at a reasonable hour and attend school regularly and punctually. School obligations include keeping parents informed about students' performance.

"The purpose," says Mr. Levin, "is to emphasize the importance of the parental role through the dignity of a written agreement that is affirmed by all parties."

Enhanced Communication

In addition to clarifying such basic obligations, educators are attempting to strengthen the regular communication between home and school.

Experts assert that the lack of information flowing between home and school may lie at the root of the dissonance between teachers and parents.

Doris Wilson, a parent at the David Ellis school, says that before the school's parent-involvement program began, it was difficult to approach teachers to discuss her child's schoolwork.

"It seemed like a lot of the teachers were on an ego trip," the Boston parent recalls. "Unless you had a teaching license, they'd look down on you."

Typically, teachers have communicated with parents in writing, by sending messages home through the mail or with the student themselves. Often, these communications are ignored or are unintelligible to poorly educated or non-English-speaking parents.

Parent-teacher conferences allow for more interaction, but are infrequent and difficult to schedule. As a result, many parents see educators only when their children are having disciplinary or academic problems.

Mr. Mardirosian of the Parent Institute notes that such limited interactions tend to remind low-income and minority parents of their own negative experiences in school.

"We have to actually teach poor parents what middle-class parents already know from their own experience—that school can be a positive, supportive place," he suggests.

To address such concerns, some schools and districts are trying to find ways to keep parents and teachers in touch on a regular basis.

The Q.E.P. program, for example, provides students with a special folder in which they can carry home schoolwork and notes from the teacher at the end of each week.

And in Connecticut, 10 schools have been using the telephone as a constant link between schools and families. As part of a pilot program offered by the Southern New England Telecommunications Corporation, several classrooms in each school have been equipped with a phone-message service that can send recorded voice messages of any length simultaneously to the parents of all students, or to any parent individually.

Parents can also leave phone messages to which the teacher responds.

Madeline A. Mongillo, a kindergarten teacher at Bradley Elementary School in Derby, Conn., uses the system to send messages to parents about each day's activities and assignments.

The system, she says, "replaces the old paper messages that would more often end up lost in the black hole of the stu-

As employers, adds Sue O. Jackson, public-relations representative for the First Tennessee Bank in Memphis, "we understand what we can accomplish in terms of building the economy and attracting industry" through such efforts. Sponsor of a project called Learning Is Home Grown, the bank has used Megaskills concepts to teach parenting and homework-help skills in some 40 sessions and "brown bag" lunches for local businesses, schools, boys' and girls' clubs, and civic groups.

Parents who take classes for their children's sake may also be more apt to pursue their own education, some suggest.

"Parents will volunteer on behalf of their children and as a result be more open to attending courses at work," says Ms. Darling. "This is an entry to ultimately getting parents involved in improving their own basic skills."

Aiding Troubled Workers

Until relatively recently, family concerns were rarely acknowledged—much less addressed—in the workplace.

Such inattention "is a byproduct of an era when corporations simply thought you leave your personal life on your doorstep and don't bring it to the office," says Mr. Stinson of A.T.&T. "Only a fool brought up personal problems at the office."

In recent years, he says, a focus on "quality of life" issues and the promotion into high-level jobs of women "more attuned [than men] to the social side of life and family obligations" have helped change such attitudes.

More than 60 percent of Fortune 500 companies now sponsor employee-assistance programs—first launched in the 1940's to restore troubled workers to productivity—to counsel workers on mental-health problems. Such programs are increasingly being used to help workers "cope with the stresses of modern living," including "parenting dilemmas," according to a 1988 article in the *Hospital and Community Psychiatry* journal.

Says John C. Otterman, senior vice president of the INB National Bank in Indianapolis: "It's very obvious that parents need help and are willing to say, 'I can learn something about doing my parenting job better'—especially when it is presented in this nonthreatening way."

The bank and the local chamber of commerce launched a parent-involvement campaign this year that encouraged parents to spend 15 minutes a day asking their children about school. It also sponsored parenting workshops and lunchtime discussions, and stuffed paychecks with parent-involvement suggestions.

Diana M. McKinney, a trust administrator at INB National, says the tips she has drawn from the effort "don't take much time but really make a difference."

Other parents, like Anna G. Morgan, say workshops such as those sponsored by the McKee Baking Company "give you ideas of things to sit down and let kids do and discuss" and have helped spark an interest in reading among children experiencing problems in school.

'Perfunctory' Steps?

Drawing employees to such programs is not always easy, however.

Harriet Hensley, director of employee-assistance programs for the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kan., notes that the clinic had to put off launching its first Family Reading pilot last spring for lack of enrollment. After stepping up recruiting among workers with children in the age bracket most likely to benefit, officials are hopeful of a better showing this month.

The New York State Office of Mental Retardation has not had a large turnout at its workshops, says Mr. Bailey, but "the people who attend think they're great."

"We hope that at some point, word of mouth will kick into play," he says.

Following an initial flurry of activity, meanwhile, several of the existing efforts have been put on hold while businesses conduct evaluations and survey workers.

Don Davies, president of the Institute for Responsive Education, contends businesses "haven't gotten the idea very quickly" to launch parenting programs.

"They often do what schools ask them to do, and schools traditionally haven't asked for things related to parents," he notes.

And most efforts, observers say, are not sustained enough to reap long-term gains.

Too often, says Mr. Little of the CATCH program in Cary, N.C., businesses are taking "perfunctory, surface" steps—"in many cases for the purpose of someone seeing us do something as opposed to the true goal."

"Seminars done for parents tend to be one-shot deals," adds Ellen Galinsky, co-president of the Families and Work Institute. "If [firms] do something once in a couple of years, that's a lot for them, but it is not really a lot for parents."

Jean LaFleur, who took part in a workshop at McKee Baking, says she wishes there had been more than three sessions—and that the instructors had had "more time to get more into the subjects."

And such programs, some warn, cannot take the place of broader family-support strategies offering flexible leave policies and help for parents in finding affordable, high-quality child care.

"If there are not enough school-age child-care programs in place," Ms. Euben of the Child Care Action Campaign maintains, families "are not going to be able to deal with all of their stress."

Time Off To Visit School

Businesses such as the International Business Machines Corporation have increasingly supported education through adopt-a-school and mentoring programs and by providing workers opportunities to teach, volunteer, or participate in school activities.

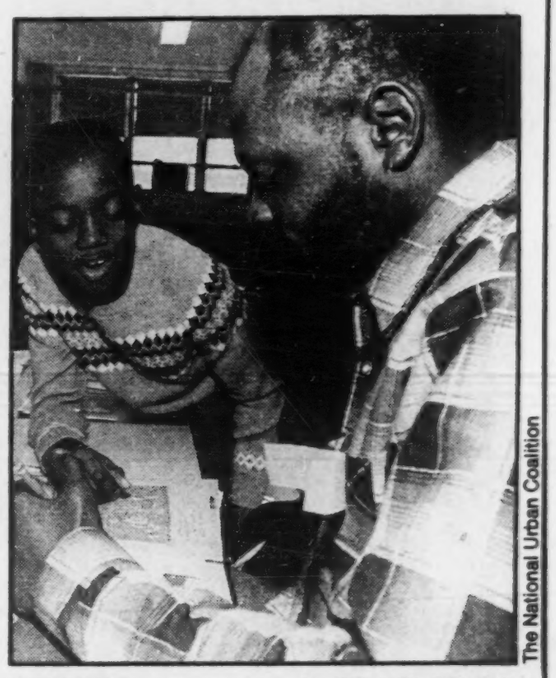
But in recent years, employers have taken more steps toward improving family welfare by helping upgrade the supply and quality of child care in their communities. In the past year, A.T.&T, I.B.M., and U S West have each committed several million dollars toward child-care and parenting initiatives.

And businesses in a few areas, such as Dade County, Fla., and St. Paul, have gone so far as to open schools at worksites, affording parents more time with their children and greater access to teachers.

Some companies have also installed special phone lines children can use to call staff members or volunteers for help on homework or other problems, or to inform parents they got home from school safely.

In addition, a growing number of firms offer flexible work schedules and leave policies to help accommodate working parents, and a few have policies expressly granting parents leave to deal with a problem or attend a meeting at school.

Employees using such a policy instituted in January by United Sanitation Services in Dade County are more "able to come to work and be an effective, productive worker," says the company's general manager, Bruce S. Malec.



The National Urban Coalition

Shell Oil Corp. sponsored a "Family Math" program offered by the National Urban Coalition in Washington, D.C.

Addressing the common complaint that schools do not always practice what they preach about parent involvement, the Dade County school district last fall issued a memorandum encouraging schools to grant teachers and other employees time off to visit their own children's schools.

As part of a pilot project offering parenting seminars and other "family-supportive" initiatives, the Florida Department of Administration is also considering a policy allowing employees a fixed amount of administrative leave each month to participate in school activities.

Mr. Little of the CATCH program contends, however, that business efforts do not begin to address the crisis of the dissolving family—and that many are "designed to fill some void where a parental investment is lacking."

Businesses should not bear the brunt of that burden, he argues, because "it is first and foremost parents' responsibility" to get involved in children's schooling.

"We've got to get individual parents and families to solve it for themselves," he says. "They're not going to do that until they decide it's a major threat to them personally." ■

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dent's book bag."

At the Park Elementary School in Dolton, Ill., two teachers have gone one step further, by creating a means for parents to view their child n at work.

A special-education teacher, Diana L. Brown, and a speech pathologist, Mary Jo Roche, won a state mini-grant last year that enabled them to rent a video camera and film their students in the classroom.

The videotapes, sent home regularly, help parents develop a clearer understanding of their children's classroom activities and behaviors.

Although the program's goal was parent education, Ms. Brown observes, parent involvement in the school increased "tremendously" during the project. "After seeing the tapes, the parents were much less threatened by the school setting," she says.

Desiree Sanchez, a New York City teacher who has been involved in the Institute for Responsive Education project, says she has found that the more contact she has with parents, the easier her job becomes.

"If I have quick access to a parent," she explains, "I have quick access to the solution to a problem."

In other places, educators are trying to increase families' participation at the school site by making schools appear less intimidating and more open to parents.

Last year, for example, state education officials in Florida instituted a "Red Carpet Schools" program to encourage educators to make parents feel welcome. Under the program, special certificates—as well as a genuine red carpet—are awarded to schools that are deemed "parent friendly" by committees of outside observers.

To qualify for the awards, schools are encouraged to make their physical facilities available to families, to set up a "warm and friendly" reception area, to provide opportunities for parent education and family involvement, to establish a parent-community advisory group, and to communicate with parents in a variety of ways.

More than 200 of the state's 2,100 schools have now earned the distinction, according to a state spokesman.

A Room of Their Own

But the I.R.E. suggests that if schools really want to make parents feel welcome, they should set up a room for parents to call their own.

At the David Ellis School, for example, the parent center is a comfortable room with places for parents to sit and a play area filled with toys for the preschool children who accompany them on their visits.

A telephone is provided for parents who do not have phones at home and for teachers to call their students' families.

In addition to the adult-education classes and workshops held weekly at the center, parents are drawn in by various social events, such as a multicultural potluck dinner and a fathers-only breakfast.

The room is staffed by Annie White, the mother of 10 children, who is paid by the I.R.E. as a parent coordinator to bridge the gap between families and the school.

Her first order of business as coordinator, she notes, was to help a homeless family find an apartment. Since then, her role has often included helping to meet the basic needs of families through referrals to other social-service agencies.

"People see me as sort of a mother figure," she says. "I know what they've been through—I've had problems with the school myself. But if I can help the parents, both the parents and the students benefit."

Vivian Johnson, the I.R.E.'s project coordinator, estimates that about 30 percent of the school's parents use the center.

"Before we came in, there was a sign on the outside of the school saying, 'Parents: Wait outside for your children,' " she recalls. "The fact that this center exists really sends a message to parents."

An Education for Parents

Schools like David Ellis are also offering workshops and classes for parents, in an effort to bring them into the school building.

As part of the Q.E.P. effort in Mississippi, seven school districts have developed monthly seminars for parents on topics of the parents' choosing. The seminars, which are held in the evenings and on weekends to meet working parents' schedules, cover such subjects as parenting skills, drug and alcohol abuse, and basic school procedures.

The goal of the seminars is to assist parents who often feel "powerless" when it comes to helping their children learn, says Ivy H. Lovelady, coordinator of the statewide pilot program. "Schools need to 'empower' parents," she says, "to teach them how to discipline their children, or to turn off the TV to help them study."

Other efforts focus on teaching parents and children together. For example, the Family Math Program, which is used by schools nationwide, teaches parents and their children problem-solving skills

Continued on Page 28

Maria R. Bastone

Experts say that more contact between parents and teachers is vital to school-home collaboration. A Derby, Conn., kindergarten teacher, Madeline A. Mongillo, top, uses a phone-message system to stay in touch with parents every day. In El Paso, below, teachers make home visits. And in Boston, right, an I.R.E. research project has attempted to bring parents into the schools for more "face-to-face contact" with teachers.

Reluctant To Approach Parents/Teachers

Have you ever felt uneasy or reluctant about approaching a parent to talk about their child?

	Yes	No
Total Teachers	55%	45%

Have you ever felt awkward or reluctant about approaching a teacher to talk about your child?

	Yes	No
Total Parents	55%	45%

Source: The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987

Benefits of Regular School Visits Include Trust, Accountability

Continued from Page 27

based on the use of hands-on materials.

In San Diego, community agencies have also joined with schools to take on the task of parent education. Mr. Mardirosian of the Parent Institute there has operated six-week courses for parents in about 25 schools over the past two years. The courses are developed by parents and taught at the schools by local college professors.

In other instances, educators have helped launch parent-education classes that take place outside the school. (*See story, page 26.*)

In Indianapolis, the district has an agreement with 15 local businesses to provide parent-education seminars at their workplaces during lunch hours. And this spring, the United Federation of Teachers and two other New York City unions announced an agreement to provide parent seminars in several languages at work sites throughout the city.

Such classes often target the parents of children in specific age groups and provide them with the skills they need to work with their youngsters on schoolwork at home or to become better parents in general.

David L. Williams Jr., director of the school improvement resources group of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, warns that schools should not intrude on the "right and ability of parents to rear children."

But he argues that without training on how to support their children's learning, parents will never become the resources that schools so desperately need.

The 'Accountability Factor'

Once parents are drawn into a school by classes geared to their needs, educators hope they will become more involved in schooling on a regular basis, with benefits to themselves and their youngsters.

For example, research has found that parents' visits to observe their children in class can engender trust and shared expectations between parents and teachers.

"If parents are in the school building at all times," says Ms. Henderson of the National Committee for Citizens in Education, "and are listened to by school officials, the kids say, 'Gee, our parents matter here,' and the school's whole climate will change."

In addition, she observes, the parents' presence introduces an "accountability factor" into the teacher-student relationship. "If parents are around, teachers will treat kids better and give them more attention," she says. "And children who get caring, loving attention do better in school."

Not Always Welcome

But parents' visits to schools on occasions other than pre-scheduled appointments often result in conflict. And teachers frequently are unwilling to comply with the full open-door policy sought by parents.

Mary Filardo, a mother of three schoolchildren in Washington, cites one example of the often halfhearted welcome offered to parents. For years, she says, her daughter's elementary school had a policy inviting parents to visit the school at any time. But no visitors were allowed on the second floor of the building, where all of the classrooms were located.

"There has always been the question of who controls the child's life in school," acknowledges Sandra Feldman, president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City. "Teachers are always concerned that parents will interfere."

In other cases, educators say they have tried to involve parents, but to no avail.

Tom Hollister, executive director of Associated Pomona Teachers in Pomona, Calif., says, "I think teachers are convinced that parents just don't have the time to get involved."

"Teachers try to lay out a plan for parents," he asserts, "they try to meet with them to get them more involved, but then no one shows up."

A *Newsweek* poll released this spring, for example, found that more than half of all parents surveyed had not attended a single back-to-school night since the school year began, while 54 percent had not gone to a single parent organization meeting. Parents most often blamed their low participation on lack of time and conflicting work schedules.

'From the School to the Home'

In response to such findings, some experts contend that schools should devote more effort to helping parents reinforce their children's learning at home, and less time to in-school activities.

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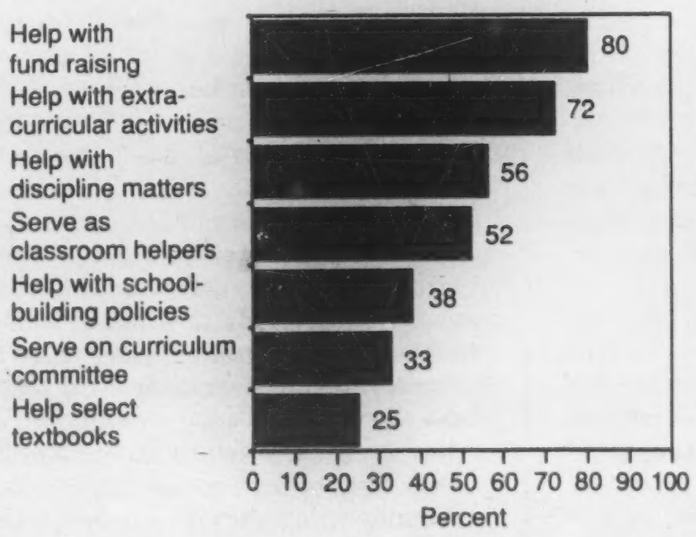
Parent Involvement in the Schools

In which of the following ways, if any, are parents, in general, involved in your child's school?

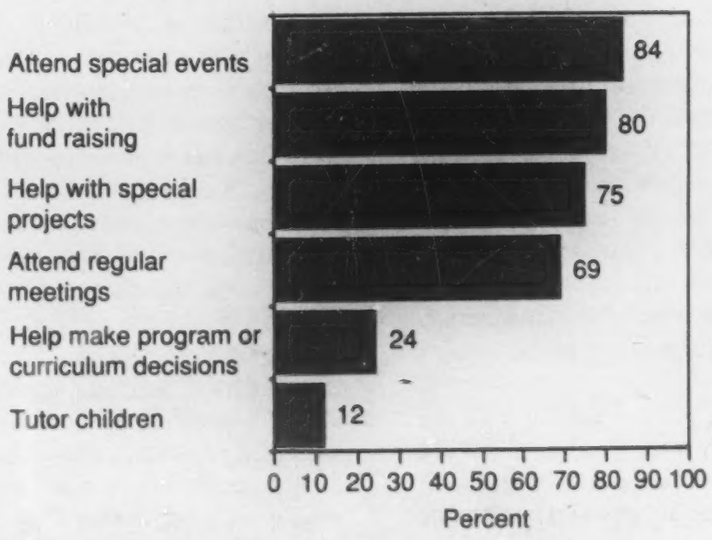

Help with fund raising 80
Help with extra-curricular activities 72
Help with discipline matters 56
Serve as classroom helpers 52
Help with school-building policies 38
Serve on curriculum committee 33
Help select textbooks 25
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percent

Base: Household heads with at least one child in grades K-12.

Source: The PTA/Dodge National Survey, Newsweek, Inc., 1990

Involvement With Parents' Group

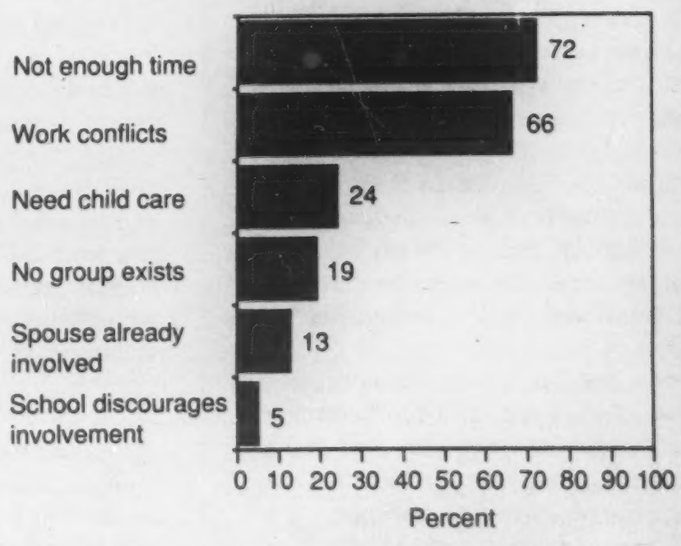
How are you involved with the parents' group at your child's school?


Attend special events 84
Help with fund raising 80
Help with special projects 75
Attend regular meetings 69
Help make program or curriculum decisions 24
Tutor children 12
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percent

Base: Household heads who belong to parents' group at their child's school.

Lack of Involvement With Parents' Group

Which reasons help explain why you choose not to be involved in a parents' group?


Not enough time 72
Work conflicts 66
Need child care 24
No group exists 19
Spouse already involved 13
School discourages involvement 5
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percent

Base: Household heads who do not belong to a parents' group.

English-Literacy Classes Help Avert Family Rifts

By Peter Schmidt

Gail Weinstein-Shr, a professor of education at Temple University, was working with Southeast Asian refugees in the Philadelphia area when she made a discovery: Educators were creating a rift between parents and their children by teaching the youngsters English-literacy skills the parents did not possess.

The pupils were frustrated that they had to translate for their parents, who knew little about the children's new life. The parents reported feeling isolated from their offspring and disadvantaged by having to rely on them for information about school.

"Everyone is torn when these conflicts arise," Ms. Weinstein-Shr says. "Every single generation has something to lose."

In an effort to bridge the gap between the generations, Ms. Weinstein-Shr helped establish Project Learning English Through Intergenerational Friendship—or LEIF—in 1985. The privately funded effort pairs adult refugees with college students who teach them English so that they can teach their children and grandchildren about their native land and customs.

Today, the program includes more than 200 volunteers at four locations in Philadelphia. It is one of dozens of recent initiatives nationwide designed to reach out to the parents of students with limited English proficiency.

Although little is known about the efficacy of such programs, their supporters report a growing level of enthusiasm and funding, spurred in part by interest in the broader area of family literacy.

'A Hot Issue'

"It's a hot issue. It's growing before it has had a chance to establish itself, before it has been defined," says Laura S. Bercovitz, project coordinator of the Northwest Educational Cooperative in Des Plaines, Ill.

The nonprofit agency operated a demonstration project from 1986 to 1989 that taught L.E.P. parents basic "survival" skills and how to understand and interact with the American school system. More than 200 copies of the curriculum for that program, Home English Literacy for Parents, have been distributed since then.

In an effort to gauge the effectiveness of educational programs for L.E.P. families, the U.S. Education Department's office of bilingual education and minority languages affairs is conducting a two-year descriptive study of 15 demonstration projects that it has funded through its Family English Literacy Program.

The study, contracted to the Atlantic Resources Council, began last October and is scheduled for completion by September 1991, according to OBEMLA officials.

Expanding Commitment

But even without data to support the effectiveness of the Family English Literacy Program, OBEMLA has been expanding its commitment to the initiative since it was authorized in 1984.

In the 1985 fiscal year, the program consisted of four three-year demonstration projects, totaling $500,000 annually. By fiscal 1989, OBEMLA had funded 35 such projects, with a total of $4.7 million in grants. And this fiscal year, it provided $4.9 million in funding.

According to Mary T. Mahony, coordinator of the federal program, all of the projects attempt to improve the academic performance of L.E.P. children by teaching their parents to teach them, by maintaining the cohesiveness of language-minority families, and by getting language-minority parents more involved in their children's schools.

The projects vary widely in curriculum and methods, however, primarily because they must accommodate diverse adult populations, Ms. Mahoney says.

'A New Deficit Model'?

Administrators of the programs also disagree over whether the schools or the parents should determine the curriculum for such programs.

Because many L.E.P. parents are recent immigrants, such efforts traditionally have told families how to shop, cook, and otherwise care for their children. And they have urged parents to tutor their youngsters by using activities similar to those taught in school.

More recently, however, literacy programs for L.E.P. families have begun to give parents greater control over the focus of the programs, based on the assumption that most parents already possess basic parenting skills and are concerned about their children's education.

Elsa R. Auerbach, an assistant professor of bilingual and English-as-a-second-language graduate studies at the University of Massachusetts, coordinated the Family English Literacy Project at the University of Massachusetts-Boston from 1987 to 1989. Since then, she has emerged as a leading advocate of parental control over family literacy programs.

According to Ms. Auerbach, children gain literacy skills by participating in routine activities that take place in the home on a daily basis, not by engaging in special exercises recommended by the schools.

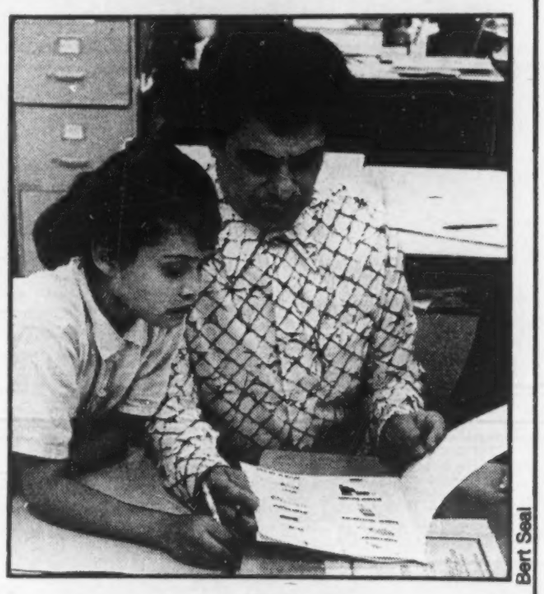
"One of the dangers of the whole attention to family literacy," Ms. Auerbach argues, "is that it becomes a new deficit model, which blames parents for problems with education and says there is something wrong with the family, and if we could only fix the family everything would be okay,"

"The parents have a lot of strengths that may not take the form that schools are usually accustomed to," she adds. "The starting point has to be the strengths of the families."

Diverse Program Offerings

The OBEMLA-funded Family English Literacy Programs are evenly divided between those that stress bilingual instruction and those that provide lessons in English. And they include an array of techniques for reaching out to L.E.P. parents. For example:

- A project begun by the Grand Rapids, Mich., schools in 1988 requests that parents and teachers sign a contract to collaborate in the education of L.E.P. preschoolers. Parents can take books home from a lending library to read to their children. Teachers assist the parents in understanding the vocabulary and concepts contained in the books.
- A program in the Baldwin Park (Calif.) Unified School District includes both English-as-a-second-language and bilingual-education techniques. It provides certificates of completion to immigrant parents who participate in the program, which they can use to help meet the language training required for U.S. citizenship.
- A program operated by the Bilinguals United for Educational Opportunity Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder attempts to reach Hispanic and Asian families in remote rural areas by collaborating with local social-service agencies.
- The Family English Literacy Through Books and Beyond program, in the Solana Beach, Calif., district, is modeled after a highly successful districtwide project that has become part of the U.S. Education Department's National Diffusion Network.



Bert Seal

Rudolfo Serratos and daughter Mercedes learn together as part of a family-literacy project in California.

According to M. Susan Holtkamp, literacy project director for the district, participating families meet at an elementary school for two hours each week. Parents and children spend the first hour working together on an E.S.L. lesson that teaches them how adapt to American society. During the second hour, children focus on literature, while their parents receive training in English and parenting skills.

Other L.E.P. families are served through the federal Even Start program, which works with the parents of disadvantaged children under age 7.

In addition, according to Meta W. Potts, director of adult-learning services at the National Center for Family Literacy, new family-literacy programs are being established as a result of the Family Support Act of 1988. The law requires states to establish a Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program for welfare recipients that includes the provision of educational services.

A network of Family Learning Centers has also been created by Service, Employment, and Redevelopment—a nonprofit, Dallas-based organization founded by Hispanic groups. The centers are designed to improve the education of Hispanic students and reduce Hispanic illiteracy rates.

The centers were piloted at three sites, in Milwaukee, Washington, and Grand Junction, Colo., in 1986. Today, there are 37 sites funded with $6.5 million in federal grants and private donations. ■

Continued from Preceding Page

"To involve more parents more often and more productively" argues Ms. Epstein, "requires changing the major location of parent involvement from the school to the home, changing the major emphasis from general policies to specific skills, and changing the major target from the general population of students or school staff to the individual child at home."

She is one of several experts nationwide who have developed models to help parents work with their children at home on school-related skills. Her program, "Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork," offers training for teachers to involve elementary- and middle-school parents in their children's homework assignments.

The program targets mathematics and science instruction in the elementary grades and social-studies instruction at the middle-school level. The goal is to help teachers guide parents through structured homework assignments that must be completed by the parent and child together.

Dorothy Rich, founder of the Home and School Institute Inc., has also been pressing for increased parent involvement at home for more than 20 years.

Drawing on ideas in her book *Megaskills: How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond*, Ms. Rich has created the Megaskills Education Center, which offers parent-training workshops across the country.

The program teaches parents to provide their children with the motivation, basic skills, and attitudes needed to succeed in school, rather than reinforcing specific in-school lessons. Students whose parents have participated in the program have shown improvement in reading, reasoning, and visual-aural skills, according to Ms. Rich.

Some programs are even sending teachers directly into students' homes to work with families. In El Paso, Tex., for example, "Project Care" provides substitutes for teachers who would like to visit parents at home during the school day.

Gloria Barragan, the project's director, says teachers were impressed by how eager even the most hard-to-reach parents were to work with their children, once they were shown how they could provide educational activities at home.

Parents as Decisionmakers

Others argue that, especially for poor and minority parents who have been disenfranchised by the educational system, attempts to foster stronger school-home ties must include giving parents a greater say in school decisionmaking.

That concept is a basic premise of the school-improvement model developed by the psychiatrist James P. Comer at Yale University's Child Study Center.

Dr. Comer contends that involving parents on governance councils that have direct input into school operations can help lessen parents' distrust of educators.

The model, which is being replicated across the country through a $15-million Rockefeller Foundation grant, focuses on children's academic, social, and emotional development through the use of teams composed of teachers, parents, and child-development specialists.

As part of the "Accelerated Schools" model developed by Mr. Levin at Stanford University, parents and teachers also collaborate in making important school decisions.

"Unless we can create schools in which . . . there are decisions that parents can make that have meaning for their children," Mr. Levin maintains, "parental involvement must necessarily be limited."

Involving parents in decisionmaking,

Continued on Page 31

States' Role in Aiding Initiatives 'Mainly Symbolic'

Continued from Page 29

however, has often proven problematic because of the potential for turf conflicts between educators and parents.

Ms. Honig of California says she designed the Q.E.P. program to avoid the school-governance issue for just that reason. "School boards would be too threatened" by a governance role for parents, she asserts.

'Words Are Meaningless' Without Support

Experts generally agree that the most effective parent-involvement programs employ a combination of approaches. Individual strategies, they say, are less important than that the efforts be comprehensive and sustained.

In contrast, existing programs still tend to be fragmented and limited in scope—in part, because of inadequate funding.

"Even when assistance is made available, there are often strings attached," notes Ms. Barragan of Project Care.

Many programs are struggling to survive on private funds, unable to convince cost-conscious school boards or state legislatures of the importance of their work.

The phone-message service created in Connecticut, for example, was scheduled to end this June, after the pilot project was completed. So far, district officials have not made a commitment to continue it.

The videotape project in Illinois ended earlier this year because the school lacked the money to buy a video camera after the initial mini-grant ran out.

And Boston's David Ellis school is in danger of losing its parent center because of overcrowding. District officials consider the room an empty classroom that should hold another group of kindergartners.

In addition, experts note that training for teachers and parents to improve home-school collaboration is sorely lacking.

"Teachers are never taught to work with adults," says Jean Krasnow, a senior researcher with the I.R.E. "There's never any discussion of the tension that exists there."

Those tracking such initiatives also say that a dearth of visible role models and weak state and district leadership have thwarted parent-involvement efforts.

Seven 'Essential Elements'

Mr. Williams of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory has identified seven "essential elements" that he says can help parent-involvement programs succeed. These include:

- Written policies at the district and school levels that establish the legitimacy of parent-involvement activities.
- Three types of support from school administrators: funding designated in the main budget; materials, equipment, and meeting space; and designation of people to carry out program efforts.
- Training for school staff members and parents to help them develop partnership skills.
- Joint planning, goal-setting, and assessment by teachers, parents, and administrators.
- Frequent, two-way communication between home and school. Parents should feel comfortable coming to school, and staff members should welcome their involvement.
- Connections with other programs, information systems, and resources that serve families, such as social-service agencies.
- Regular evaluations and revisions, where necessary.

"Words about the importance of parent involvement are meaningless without financial and technical support," says Ms. Epstein of Johns Hopkins University.

"State education agencies have offered mainly symbolic, verbal support for the importance of parent involvement," she maintains, "but little financial support for staff and programs needed to improve parent understanding, teacher practices, and family and school connections."

'A Long Way To Go'

A 50-state survey released this spring—"Assessing State Parental Involvement Legislation and Regulations: Is the Cup Half Empty or Half Full?"—supports Ms. Epstein's criticisms.

Of the 47 states responding to the survey, 20 had enacted some type of legislation to promote school-home collaboration. But most of those simply encouraged districts to reach out to parents as part of a broader school initiative, such as Head Start, Chapter 1, or the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

Only four states had mandated that districts involve parents in the education of their children, and in each case there were limits on the type of participation required.

For example, two of the states, Missouri and Oregon, required districts to work with parents before their children reached school age, but not after.

The other two states, South Carolina and Massachusetts, focused only on involving parents on advisory councils that monitor school improvement.

"It can be seen that, while making inroads, parent involvement as an integral element in the educational process still has a long way to go," the report concluded.

Another report, released last July, found that state education agencies "offer only lip service to advancing improved home-school connections."

The report analyzed the number of staff members in each state responsible for coordinating school-home programs. It found that state education agencies had allocated only one full-time employee for every 500,000 public-school students nationwide.

"Even those states that might claim to provide leadership in parent-involvement practices," it concluded, "are providing insufficient monetary and human resources to ensure healthy and continued collaboration on the district and local level between the school and home."

State and District Action

A few states and districts are trying to promote more aggressive efforts.

Dade County, Fla., and San Diego adopted far-reaching parent-involvement policies this year. Neither district mandates such programs, but both offer financial incentives and technical assistance to help schools develop parent-participation programs.

The Dade County policy, adopted in April, was forged by a task force of school officials, teachers, parents, and community members, who often clashed over components of the plan.

The policy they finally agreed on offers parents a "bill of rights," according to Betsy Kaplan, the school-board member who initiated the concept. Parents are guaranteed an equal role on school-governance committees at every school, and they have a say in the selection of principals and teachers.

The district has established an office of parent involvement, with a full-time coordinator. In addition to general parent-education workshops, training is offered to school staff members and parents to help them learn to collaborate.

The district is also lobbying local businesses to offer employees leave time to become involved in their children's schools. And district officials are pushing for local teacher-education programs to include training on the role of parents in education.

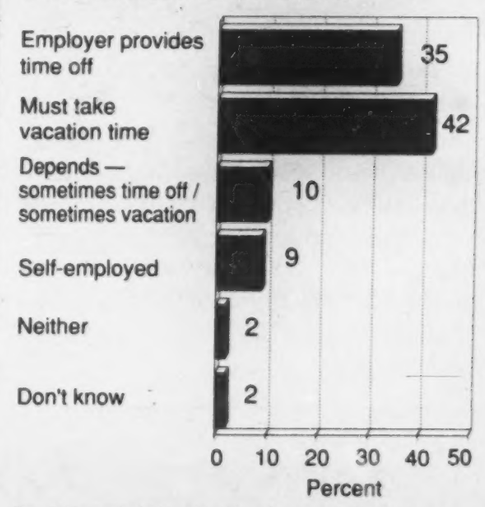
Ms. Kaplan emphasizes that the Dade County plan will attempt to include "all kinds of parents," not just a limited few.

"There are parents out there who aren't doing the best job, and there are teachers and principals who aren't doing the best job. But if we keep parents out of the education process, none of them will be able to do the best job for their children," she argues.

Continued on Page 32

Time Off From Work

Does your employer provide you with time off for important school conferences or activities, or must you take vacation time to attend these school affairs?



Base: Household heads with at least one child in grades K-12 and who are employed.

Source: The PTA/Dodge National Survey, Newsweek Inc., 1990

Barry Ladwig

San Diego has a comprehensive parent-involvement plan that allows parents like Ester Williams to play many roles in her daughter Laura's junior high school.

If parents are in the school building at all times, and are listened to . . . the school's whole climate will change.

—Anne Henderson

Before we came in, there was a sign on the outside of the school saying, 'Parents: Wait outside for your children.'

—Vivian Johnson

Teachers are convinced that parents just don't have the time to get involved . . . no one shows up.

—Tom Hollister

People are running to parent involvement as a Band-Aid to fix things. But it won't unless it's part of an overall plan.

—Janet Chrispeels

Continued from Page 31

The San Diego policy also offers parents a role in school decisionmaking. In addition, the new office of parent involvement has developed a series of guidebooks and other literature to promote school-home collaboration.

The policy, which will take three years to carry out, establishes an action plan for schools that includes strategies to improve communication, involve parents at the school site, and make better use of community resources.

Janet Chrispeels, coordinator of the district policy, notes that the San Diego program was developed as part of a broader reform plan.

"People are running to parent involvement as a Band-Aid to fix things, but frankly it won't work unless it is part of an overall school-improvement plan," she contends.

Although San Diego officials developed their plan locally, its success is related to a state policy promoting parent involvement that was adopted last year.

California was the first state to adopt a comprehensive policy calling for increased parent involvement in education.

Since then, officials in several other states have indicated interest in the concept. For example:

- In Minnesota, legislators passed a bill last October that calls for the creation of a comprehensive parent-involvement plan. A state conference—including a wide range of parent advocates, educators, community leaders, social-service workers, and state officials—was held in April to begin drafting a model policy.

A key component of the plan will be financial incentives to promote innovative school-home partnerships, according to state Representative Ken G. Nelson, a sponsor of the bill.

- Joseph Shilling, state superintendent of education in Maryland, in May included increased parent involvement as one of 10 goals for the school system. Plans for a statewide policy have not yet been released, but the superintendent is calling for nontraditional, collaborative relationships between homes, schools, and communities.
- Mississippi lawmakers this spring approved a reform package, called Better Education for Success Tomorrow, or BEST, that includes both carrots and sticks to promote increased parental involvement in education. The package, as yet unfunded, includes a plan to help lower the dropout rate by coordinating community services for parents through the workplace, churches, schools, and other institutions.

In addition, the law requires parents to attend disciplinary conferences for their children or face a misdemeanor charge or a fine of up to $2,000.

'Waiting for the Revolution'

But Don Davies, executive director of the Institute for Responsive Education, says he has grown impatient waiting for "the revolution" to come from state and district initiatives.

In an effort to promote successful programs, and help schools share ideas on how to involve parents, the I.R.E. has established a League of Schools Reaching Out in 19 urban districts across the country.

The 37 league schools were chosen for having taken "the first step toward forging new partnerships to support students both in and out of the classroom," Mr. Davies says.

Through the network, the schools will share ideas for promoting parent involvement with each other and with other interested groups.

Mr. Davies says he also plans to develop a model for collaboration based on findings from the I.R.E.'s efforts at the David Ellis school and a sister laboratory school in New York City.

In an upcoming report on his work with the Ellis school, Mr. Davies concludes that "the educational revolution is likely to occur in small stages, gradually and painfully, with many starts and stops."

"It is better to begin with some ideas that work and that can be achieved by ordinary people with reasonable effort," he argues.

Although the research project at the David Ellis school is over and the I.R.E. officials do not expect to continue working as closely with parents and teachers there, the school-home partnership is expected to continue.

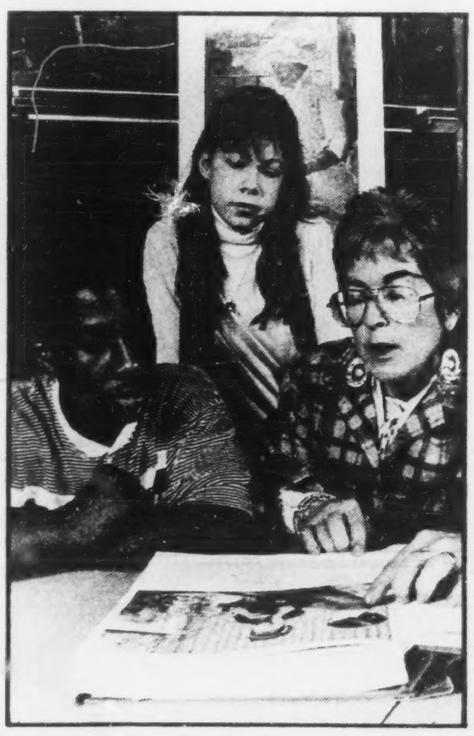
"Some people say that, when we leave, the teachers will all go back into their classrooms and shut the door, and the parents will go back home," says Ms. Krasnow of the I.R.E. "But I think the teachers here are ready to go on to another level. They started the change, and I think it won't be stopped." ■

This special series on parental involvement in education is being underwritten by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Status of Parent-Involvement Legislation/Guidelines by State

State	Legislation	Guidelines	No Legislation/ Guidelines	No Response
Alabama			●	
Alaska			●	
Arizona	●			
Arkansas	●			
California		●		
Colorado		●		
Connecticut	●			
Delaware			●	
Florida	●			
Georgia	●			
Hawaii		●		
Idaho			●	
Illinois	●			
Indiana				●
Iowa				●
Kansas			●	
Kentucky			●	
Louisiana		●		
Maine	●			
Maryland	●			
Massachusetts	●			
Michigan	●			
Minnesota			●	
Mississippi			●	
Missouri	●			
Montana			●	
Nebraska		●		
Nevada			●	
New Hampshire			●	
New Jersey	●			
New Mexico			●	
New York	●			
North Carolina			●	
North Dakota			●	
Ohio			●	
Oklahoma			●	
Oregon	●			
Pennsylvania	●			
Rhode Island			●	
South Carolina	●			
South Dakota			●	
Tennessee	●			
Texas	●			
Utah	●			
Vermont			●	
Virginia			●	
Washington				●
West Virginia	●			
Wisconsin		●		
Wyoming			●	
TOTAL	20	6	21	3

Source: "Assessing State Parental-Involvement Legislation and Regulations," Frank Nardine,1990



Kathy McLaughlin/USA Today

In Baltimore, the focus is on parent involvement in middle schools. Experts say older pupils can benefit.

Resources on School-Parent Linkages

Publications:

Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working With Parents (1986) by Anne T. Henderson, Carl L. Marburger, and Theodora Ooms. Available for $8.95 from National Committee on Citizens in Education (see below).

Communicating with Parents by Janet Chrispeels. Available for $28 from San Diego County Office of Education, 6401 Linda Vista Rd., Room 407, San Diego, Calif. 92111-7399.

First Teachers: A Family Literacy Handbook for Parents, Policy Makers, and Literacy Providers (1990). Available for $4 from Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, 1002 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.

The Home-School Connection: Selected Partnership Programs in Large Cities (1982) by C. Collins, O. Moles, and M. Cross. Available for $8 from Institute for Responsive Education (see below).

Improving the Home-School Connection (1989) by Carol Ascher. Available for $3 from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027.

A New Paradigm for Parent Involvement by David Seeley. In *Educational Leadership*, October 1989, pp. 47-48.

Parent Participation in the Schools by James Comer. In *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1986, pp. 442-446.

Partners for Student Success: A Handbook for Principals (1990) by Janet Chrispeels, Beatrice Fernandez, and Jeana Preston. Available for $10 through San Diego City Schools, Community Relations and Integration Services Division, 4100 Normal St., Room 2109, San Diego, Calif. 92103.

Resource Organizations:

Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, 3505 North Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21218; (301) 338-7570.

Home and School Institute, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 466-3633.

National Committee for Citizens in Education, 10840 Little Patuxent Pkwy., #301, Columbia, Md. 21044-3199; (301) 977-9300.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 211 East 7th St., Austin, Tex. 78701; (512) 476-6361.

Institute for Responsive Education, 605 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mass. 02215; (617) 353-3309.

This Week's Forum: Pages 45 and 46

EDUCATION WEEK

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Williams Charts A New Agenda For Rights Office

Moves Seen as Break With Reagan Policies

By Julie A. Miller

WASHINGTON—Michael L. Williams, the Education Department's new assistant secretary for civil rights, has announced that he plans to focus the agency's attention on issues that civil-rights advocates contend were considered "off limits" under the Reagan Administration.

Mr. Williams said the office for civil rights will focus compliance reviews—probes initiated by the agency without a specific complaint—on ability grouping, the treatment of children whose native language is not English, schools' policies toward pregnant teenagers, and racial harassment on college campuses.

"They're the educational equity issues of the 90's," Mr. Williams said in a wide-ranging session with reporters last month. "Does that mean there's a new breeze blowing? I don't know."

"I believe very strongly in George Bush, and I believe the President would want me to tackle the issues that are out there," he said, adding, "I didn't ask anybody's permission."

"I don't have any way of knowing if there were off-limits issues in the past," Mr. Williams said.

He said he planned to unveil next month a "national enforcement strategy," further detailing his agenda for the O.C.R. The unprecedented document will outline his view of the agency's enforcement role, his priorities, and how the O.C.R. will divide its resources among its responsibilities.

Advocates have been particularly vocal in urging the O.C.R. to investigate a range of issues related to ability grouping—including academic tracking, the disproportionate placement of minority children in special education, unequal application of disci-

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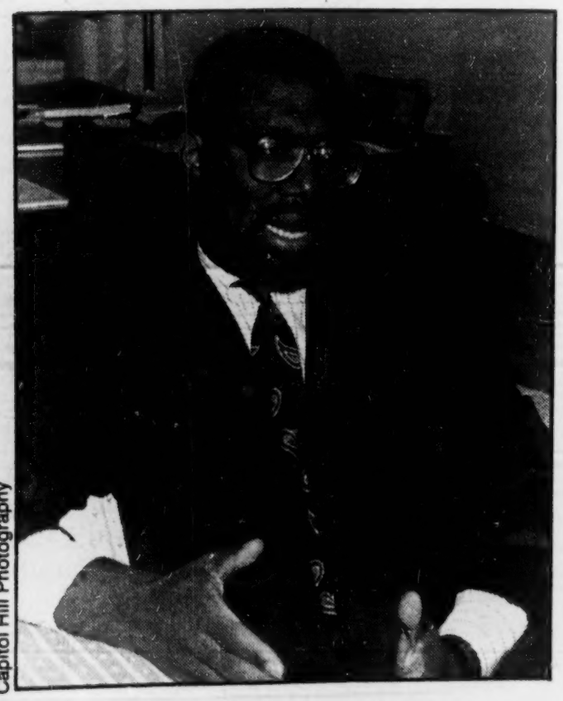
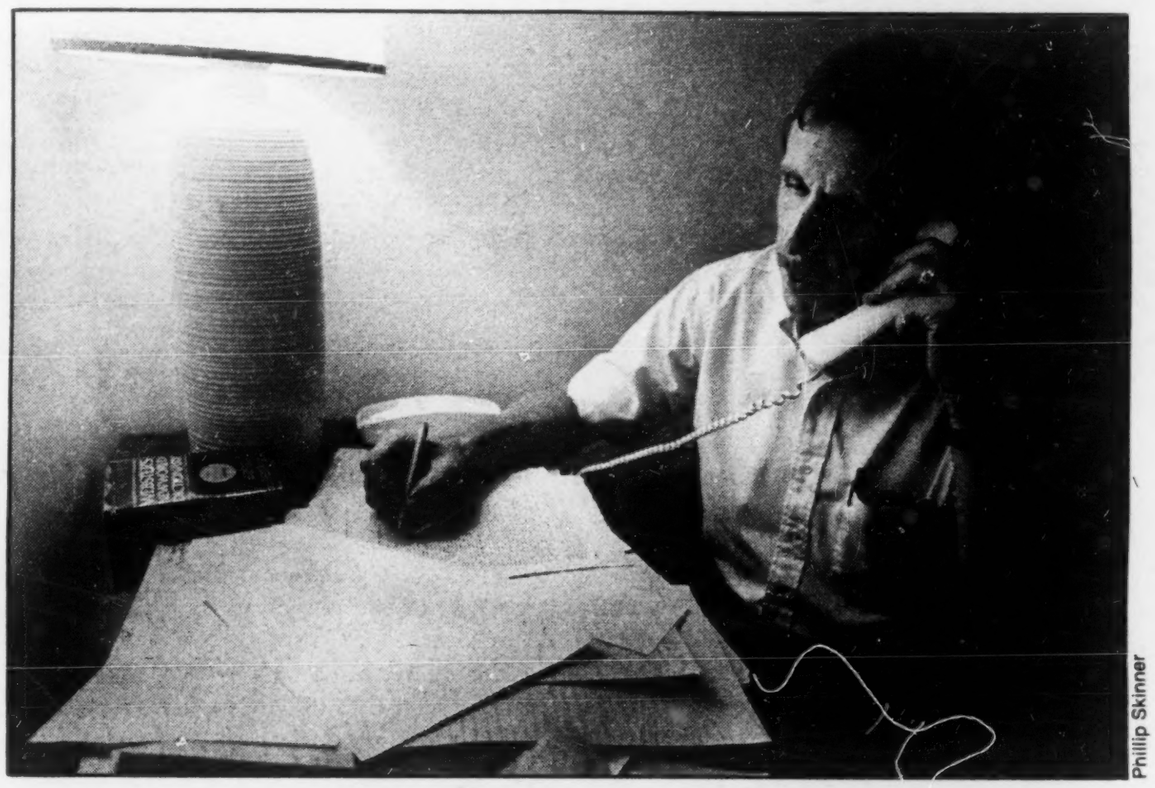


Capitol Hill Photography

Michael L. Williams, E.D.'s new assistant secretary for civil rights.

Turmoil in Gulf Hits Mideast's American Schools



Phillip Skinner

Ralph Jahr, hired as superintendent of the now-closed American School of Kuwait, conducts business from his temporary home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Enrollments Off, They Strive for 'Normal' Year

By Mark Walsh

Ralph Jahr was on a jet bound for Kuwait early on Aug. 2 to begin a new job as superintendent of the American School there.

Suddenly, the pilot came over the intercom and announced that the plane was diverting to Bahrain, in the Persian Gulf off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

"We landed before the stewardesses could even take breakfast trays off the tables," Mr. Jahr recalled. "I think the pilot wanted to get out of the air as fast as possible."

The reason soon became evident to Mr. Jahr and the other passengers. Iraq was in the process of invading Kuwait, setting off the most serious international crisis since the waning of the Cold War.

The plight of Americans and other foreign nationals taken hostage by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in the wake of the invasion, or otherwise threatened by the turmoil in the Gulf, has cast light on the world of expatriate workers and their families in the Middle East.

In most countries there, at least one American-curriculum school exists to serve the U.S. community and keep its children on track for easy re-entry to schools at home or admission to American colleges and universities.

Due to summer breaks, many American teachers and administrators at such schools in Kuwait and Iraq were out of the country at the time of the invasion. And there were reports that some American educators in those countries managed to escape in the days following the invasion, as did thousands of other foreign nationals.

For those Americans remaining in Kuwait and Iraq, the question of schooling for their children has, no doubt, taken a back seat to concerns for personal safety. As of last week, there was no evidence that schools serving the expatriate community in the two countries would be operating as usual.

In other Middle Eastern countries, however, educators at American and international schools were busy preparing for a

Continued on Page 24

School Officials Scramble To Blunt Impact of Surge in Gasoline Prices

By Lonnie Harp

Surging gasoline prices are forcing school administrators across the nation to recalculate transportation budgets and dust off conservation measures last used during the oil crises of the 1970's, as unrest in the Middle East threatens to take its toll on school spending plans.

The upset in the world oil market touched off by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing threat of war in the Persian Gulf region quickly hit home. State and local school-transportation officials in many areas report 50 percent increases in fuel prices between summer, when they last filled their bulk tanks, and today's rate.

The rising gasoline prices—which some states estimate will cost more than $100,000 over the course of the school year for every penny increase in the average price of gas—are leading top school officials to develop requests for supplemental funding when state legislatures convene this winter.

While some fuel costs, such as heating oil for buildings, can be postponed until cold weather arrives and current supplies are exhausted, the higher price of running school buses, which often burn a gallon of fuel every five miles, is cause for immediate concern.

"We know it's going to have an impact, and we're already putting our proposal together," said Don M. Carnahan, director of pupil transportation for Washington State. School officials there already plan to re-

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Despite Doubts, NAEP Panel Meets To Set First National Standards for Achievement

By Robert Rothman

ESSEX JUNCTION, VT.—After expressing misgivings about the process, a group of educators, business leaders, and public officials met here last month to set what could become the first national standards for student achievement.

Taking what some officials called a historic step, the 71 judges analyzed each of the questions on the 1990 National Assessment of Educational Progress test in mathematics, and made judgments about whether students at "basic," "proficient," and "advanced" levels of achievement should be able to answer them correctly.

Their decisions will be compiled into a report, expected to be released this month, that will outline how students at each of the three levels of performance in grades 4, 8, and 12 should perform on the assessment.

If their proposals are adopted by the National Assessment Governing Board, next spring that panel will report the results of the math assessment—the first to include state-by-state data—by comparing how students actually measured up to the standards. In the past, NAEP has simply described how students performed on the assessments.

Some participants in the process, however, questioned whether the exercise would produce improvements in education. Noting that the procedure they used is normally employed by small groups setting a sin-

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Minorities who graduate from predominantly white high schools are found more likely to complete college.

8 **Rumbles in Rochester**
A salary dispute may derail progress toward yet another groundbreaking contract for teachers.

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E.D. moves to halt federal aid to the Georgia education department and the DeKalb County schools.

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A Historic First
Leaders of 20 subject-matter groups met behind closed doors last week in an effort to forge a common understanding about what should be taught in the nation's schools. **Page 6.**

Teacher Dissatisfaction
A Carnegie Foundation report to be released this week concludes that teachers are much less satisfied than they were three years ago with the degree of control they have over their professional lives. **Page 9.**

Defying Deukmejian
State Controller Gray Davis of California last week defied Gov. George Deukmejian and announced that he would begin sending school districts funds the Governor had impounded. **Page 30.**

Who Monitors the Goals?
The White House and the nation's governors appear headed for a fight with the Congress over how to monitor progress toward the national education goals set earlier this year. **Page 34.**

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Events and Index Supplement

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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

K-12 Spending Rises by 7.2 Percent, To Record $231 Billion for 1990-91

Total education spending during the 1990-91 school year will rise by 6.9 percent, to a record $359 billion, the U.S. Education Department predicts in its annual back-to-school forecast.

Precollegiate education, public and private, will get the largest percentage increase, with outlays from local, state, federal, and private sources estimated to be $231 billion, a 7.2 percent jump from 1989-90. When adjusted for inflation, that is a 34 percent increase since 1980-81, the department says.

Spending at the nation's public and private colleges and universities is expected to total an estimated $152.5 billion, or 6.5 percent over last year. After adjustment for inflation, that represents a 41 percent increase since 1980-81, the department says.

The report also predicts that:

- The average per-pupil expenditure in public elementary and secondary schools will reach a record $5,638, a $354 increase over last year.
- The average salary of public K-12 teachers will reach $33,300, a 6 percent increase over last year.
- Total elementary and secondary enrollment will climb by 200,000 students, to 46.2 million.

■ **Enrollment at independent private schools increased slightly last year, and was up about 2 percent throughout the 1980's,** according to a new study by the National Association of Independent Schools.

Enrollment grew 0.7 percent from the 1988-89 school year to 1989-90 at a core sample of longstanding N.A.I.S. member schools, the study says.

Despite a slight decrease in the number of school-age children in the United States in the 1980's, independent-school enrollment increased from 305,144 in 1981-82 to 311,948 in 1989-90—a 2.2 percent change.

John C. Esty Jr., president of the N.A.I.S., noted that enrollment in preschool to 2nd grade at member schools increased by about 28 percent.

"A new generation of parents has demonstrated its confidence in independent schools," he said.

■ **Although attempts to censor what children read and learn in school were on the rise last year, the censors seemed to win fewer cases,** according to a report issued last week by People for the American Way.

The constitutional-liberties watchdog group documented 244 efforts over the last school year by parents or school officials in 39 states to ban books or lessons they deemed to be dangerous or offensive. That number represented an increase over the previous school year's total of 179 incidents nationwide.

But censors were successful in fewer than one-third of those cases, according to the report. Over the 1988-89 school year, in contrast, nearly half of such requests were granted.

The report's authors attributed the decline to increased efforts on the part of school officials to develop written guidelines for handling censorship demands.

■ **The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has announced that it is establishing guidelines for determining whether arts and crafts materials present chronic long-term health hazards and should be given warning labels,** as required by a new federal law.

The new labeling standards, to take effect in November, were mandated in the Labeling of Hazardous Materials Act of 1988.

All arts and crafts materials determined to present a chronic hazard will be required to carry warning labels that identify hazardous ingredients and list guidelines for safe use. The new label will supplement current labeling for acute hazards such as flammability or irritation.

The commission advises elementary schools not to purchase potentially hazardous arts or crafts materials for use by students under age 12.

■ **The RJR Nabisco Foundation has announced that it is accepting applications for the second round of its "Next Century Schools" grants,** designed to support "risktaking and entrepreneurship" in education.

Last year, the foundation awarded $8.5 million to 15 schools in nine states. The awards ranged from $100,000 to $250,000 per year for three years. The foundation has pledged to provide a total of $30 million over five years.

Applications must be received by Oct. 31. Finalists will be chosen in January and asked to submit more detailed proposals in March. Winners will be announced in April.

An evaluation of schools receiving grants is being conducted by education professors at the University of Tennessee.

More information is available from the Next Century Schools Fund, RJR Nabisco Foundation, Suite 550, 1455 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington D.C. 20004.

■ **The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and about 100 other organizations have created a coalition to work to improve social and economic conditions in the black community.**

The National Association of Black Organizations, formed last month, will focus on ways that the black community can help itself. The group will establish a network for sharing information; research, analyze, and make recommendations on socioeconomic issues facing blacks; develop strategies for supporting black institutions; and identify and replicate effective self-help initiatives in local communities.

James D. Williams, a spokesman for the N.A.A.C.P., said the new coalition was likely to look at such issues as teenage pregnancy and dropouts. The coalition's agenda and structure, he said, will be hammered out at a meeting later this month.

■ **In a state-by-state ranking of schools published by the newly formed American Association of Parents and Children, only two states, Connecticut and Wyoming, earned strong grades in every area measured.**

The nonprofit organization was launched in July to offer parents guidance on how to improve their children's educational achievement and help them plan for college.

In a survey released late last month, the A.A.P.C. rated states on such factors as parental apathy as judged by teachers, rates of participation in Head Start, pupil-teacher ratios, per-pupil spending, graduation rates, and scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Testing Program assessment. The data were compiled from a variety of education re-

A Colorado Baedeker, Kid-Style

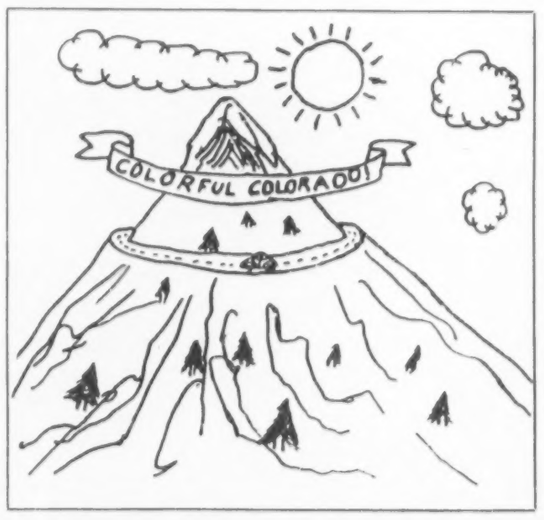
Looking for an exciting field-trip location in Colorado? How about Frontier Park, which features a "funny outhouse shaped like a Christmas tree"? Or maybe you'd prefer the "big, dark, noisy, scary power generating station" in Denver?

In "Explore Colorado Kid Style," a new regional guidebook, 71 Jefferson County students offer their youthful perspectives on the sights to see and places to go in Colorado's Front Range.

Sponsored by the Westridge Elementary P.T.A., the book is the fourth in a series published through the school's summer enrichment program. This summer, 26 teachers received college credit while teaching 4th- through 6th-graders about publishing.

These "mentors" helped to check the accuracy of students' comments, although they practiced a high degree of tolerance in editing. "We left the candid things in," says Judy Cozzens, founder of the program.

For example, they spared the interesting observations that the Governor's Mansion in Denver is "a real big house," and that a tour of the U.S. Mint inspired in a young visitor "the great urge to take a plunge into the barrels of coins!"



Greater restraint may have been necessary in the description of a chamber pot's nocturnal function. "In the morning, the children would empty it," the young author wrote.

The students also rated restaurants, one of which featured a menu that is "low in salt and would be good for everyone, even your grandparents."

And one budding critic observed that "the best food depends on your palate."

Copies are available for $8.45 each, including postage and handling, from Explore Colorado Kid Style, P.O. Box 6992, Denver, Colo. 80206. —S.K.G.

MEDIA

Education is getting a great deal of attention this month from three major television networks.

This week, CBS News has mustered its newsgathering forces for a major effort on the topic, including special reports on the evening news, a prime-time special, and a national conference.

The centerpiece of the network's "Project Education" will be a two-hour special, "America's Toughest Assignment: Solving the Education Crisis." The program, to be anchored by Charles Kuralt, will present nine recommendations for improving the nation's schools, and will show examples from schools around the nation. The special airs at 9 P.M. Eastern time on Thursday, Sept. 6.

On the same night, following the late local news (11:30 P.M. Eastern time), CBS will air a one-hour forum including teachers, students, and community leaders around the nation.

On Wednesday, Sept. 5, CBS News is bringing together education experts for a national conference to discuss such topics as teachers, school finance, and student assessment. Portions of the conference will be broadcast on the "CBS Nightwatch" program on Friday, Sept. 7, from 2 A.M. to 4 A.M. Eastern time.

Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is the educational consultant for the network's effort.

■

Meanwhile, on the Public Broadcasting Service, the correspondent Roger Mudd this week will present a follow-up to last year's "Learning in America" documentary series.

"Learning in America: Schools That Work" is scheduled to air from 9 to 11 P.M. on Wednesday, Sept. 5, although viewers should check local listings. The program will look at four thriving elementary schools—in Manhattan, Kan.; Landover, Md.; Lowell, Mass.; and Corpus Christi, Tex.

The program is a co-production of MacNeil/Lehrer Productions and public-television station WETA in Washington.

■

On Sunday, Sept. 9, the Cable News Network will air a one-hour report, "The Education Revolution," examining such issues as school choice, computers in the schools, and partnerships with business. The special airs at 9 P.M. Eastern time.

■

Next April, the entertainment divisions of the four major broadcast networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox—plan to spend a week incorporating educational themes into their regular series, such as portraying teachers as role models.

The networks announced the project last month in Hollywood, Calif., although the specifics remain sketchy.

—M.W.

Gallup Poll Finds Doubts Goals Can Be Met by 2000

By Lynn Olson

WASHINGTON—Americans support the national education goals adopted last February by President Bush and the nation's governors but doubt they can be achieved by the year 2000, according to the 22nd Annual Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll.

More than three-quarters of the 1,594 adults interviewed by the Gallup Organization in April and May attached a high priority to all six of the national goals.

But only 19 percent to 50 percent of the respondents believed that any particular goal was likely or very likely to be achieved in the next 10 years.

The only objective that even half the respondents thought the nation might attain by the turn of the century was preparing all children to learn before they begin school.

"My guess is that if you took the same public and really probed with them what's going to be required to achieve that goal . . . the percentage would go down," said Lowell C. Rose, executive director of Phi Delta Kappa International, at a press conference here to release the survey results.

Little Improvement

Mr. Rose attributed people's skepticism in part to their conviction that societal ills—rather than the quality of the schools—are largely responsible for school problems.

Only 22 percent of the respondents believed public schools in their communities had gotten better in the last five years; 30 percent believed they had gotten worse; and 36 percent believed they had stayed about the same.

Those surveyed rated drug use as the biggest problem facing the schools, outranking both lack of discipline and lack of proper financial support by substantial margins.

Confusing Response

This year's survey also delved into the question of public-school choice, which has become a controversial item on many legislative agendas.

As in 1989, a sizable majority of those surveyed (62 percent) favored allowing families to choose among public schools.

"That places the public and the educational establishment for the most part in opposition to each other," said Mr. Rose.

This year, respondents were asked to specify which aspects of a public school would influence their choices the most. Teacher quality, student discipline, and curriculum were judged very important by at least three-fourths of those surveyed.

But class and school size, the track record of school graduates, and proximity to the student's home were also rated important by large majority.

In a finding that researchers were reluctant to interpret, 45 percent of white and 67 percent of nonwhite respondents said the racial or ethnic composition of the student body would influence their choice of school.

Opponents of choice frequently have argued that such programs could resegregate schools. But it is not clear from the survey results whether respondents would favor schools with more or less integrated enrollments, said Sarah Van Allen, project director for the survey at the Gallup Organization.

Parental Involvement

Respondents were also asked their opinion on another controversial topic: involving parents in school decisionmaking.

A large majority of those surveyed said parents have little or no say in determining the curriculum, selecting instructional materials, and hiring teachers and administrators.

In contrast, more than 40 percent of those polled in 1989 believed that parents should have a greater say in these areas.

Educators and the general public may also be at loggerheads on the issue of grade retention. As in past years, most of the public (67 percent) believe that children should be promoted from grade to grade only if they pass examinations.

Indeed, a majority of those polled thought that students would more likely drop out of school if they failed such tests and were promoted than if they were forced to repeat a grade.

That perception runs directly counter to research, which suggests grade retention may be harmful to children.

Unequal Opportunities?

Finally, although white adults appear convinced that, on the whole, minority and nonminority children have the same educational opportunities, a disturbing 38 percent of nonwhite respondents continue to perceive inequality in education.

Much of that dissatisfaction appears among respondents in large cities, where minority populations are concentrated.

Copies of the poll are available at $10 for 25 copies from Gallup Poll, Phi Delta Kappa, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, Ind. 47402-0789. For more information on the poll, call P.D.K. at (812) 339-1156.

Views on National Educational Goals

The Goals

A. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.
B. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
C. By the year 2000, American students will leave grades 4,8,and 12 having demonstrated compentency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography. In addition, every school in America will insure that all students learn to use their minds, in order to prepare them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in a modern economy.
D. By the year 2000, American students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
E. By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will posess the skills necessary to complete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
F. By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a diciplined environment conducive to learning.

Priority Assigned Each Goal

Goal	Very High %	High %	Low %	Very Low %	Don't Know %
A	44	44	6	2	4
B	45	42	8	1	4
C	46	42	7	2	3
D	34	42	16	3	5
E	45	37	11	3	4
F	55	26	9	6	4

Likelihood of Attainment

Goal	Very Likely %	Likely %	Unlikely %	Very Unlikely %	Don't Know %
A	12	38	33	12	5
B	10	35	37	12	6
C	9	38	36	12	5
D	6	23	41	24	6
E	7	25	42	21	5
F	5	14	40	36	5

Source: 22nd Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

Chicago Board, Teachers Agree on 3-Year Contract

By Ann Bradley

After nearly 11 months of negotiations, the Chicago Teachers' Union and the Chicago Board of Education have reached tentative agreement on an unprecedented three-year contract that will give teachers raises totaling 20.7 percent.

However, Gov. James R. Thompson of Illinois has vetoed portions of a bill that would permit the district to pay for the contract with $66 million in local tax money that would otherwise have gone to the teachers' pension fund and a capital-improvement fund.

While the Governor's veto did not affect the provisions of the bill necessary for paying for the teachers' contract, it throws into doubt whether state legislators will support the measure as amended. The legislature reconvenes in November.

The vetoed portions of the bill would have shifted responsibility for the Chicago teachers' pension fund to the state and provided all teachers in Illinois with the option of retiring at age 55 with 30 years of service. They were included in the measure in an attempt to garner statewide support for the bill, but Mr. Thompson said the provisions would "burden the state financially."

The tentative contract, scheduled to be voted on by the union membership on Sept. 14, calls for Chicago teachers to receive their first-year raises on Nov. 5. District officials said last week that the schedule gives the legislature enough time to pass the bill.

Richard Guidice, the assistant superintendent for government relations, said he does not anticipate opposition to the amended bill.

"It's all local money," he said, "so as long as our local legislators are in support, and they are, there's no reason we wouldn't be able to divert our own money."

A New Era?

Union officials said the agreement on a three-year contract, the first in the city's history, marks a new era of labor-management cooperation in Chicago, which has seen repeated strikes over the past 20 years.

The negotiations were conducted by the president and vice president of the interim board of education, rather than by staff members, noted Pamelyn Massarsky, recording secretary of the C.T.U. and a member of the union's negotiating team. And for the first time, the talks were held at the union's headquarters.

"The old traditional barriers were broken down," Ms. Massarsky said. "Like-minded people with similar objectives in mind worked together to accomplish a goal."

The agreement, which will increase starting teachers' salaries to $24,000 a year, adds two more "lanes" to the salary schedule to encourage veteran teachers to go back to school for more credits, Ms. Massarsky said.

Teachers who choose to do so will be paid bonuses of $6,000 over five years, in addition to being paid more for the courses they have taken.

It also calls for the establishment of several union-school district committees, including one to create a "peer professional advisory program" that will assign mentors to first-year teachers and experienced teachers who are not performing well.

Other committees will develop programs for intern teachers, determine incentives for encouraging teachers' assistants to become teachers, and suggest ways to reduce class size.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Ted D. Kimbrough has modified a proposal to shift approximately 150 central-office administrators to "service centers" in the city's 11 subdistricts following protests from members of the city's local school councils.

Although Mr. Kimbrough said his service-center plan would bring the district's resources closer to the schools, the reform coalition Alliance for Better Chicago Schools denounced the proposal as an unwelcome bureaucratic intrusion that failed to take the schools' needs into account.

Instead, two subdistricts will be served by service centers, and schools in two other districts will be given money directly to use as they see fit. The two methods will be evaluated to determine which is more successful.